

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1    Claims 1-4 (canceled)

1    5. (Currently Amended) A switching system for providing a signal in response to an article  
2    which provides a magnetic field, the switching system comprising:

3    (a)    a sensor for sensing the magnetic field of the magnetic article, said sensor for  
4    generating a first signal voltage having a signal voltage level which is proportional to a  
5    magnetic field having a first polarity and a second signal voltage having a signal voltage level  
6    that is proportional to a magnetic field having a second different polarity; and

7    (b)    a threshold detection circuit coupled to the sensor to receive the first and second  
8    signal voltages and to provide an output signal having a first value when said magnetic article  
9    is within a predetermined distance of the sensor regardless of the polarity of the magnetic  
10   field; and

11   (c)    a bias circuit coupled to said threshold detection circuit for maintaining operating  
12   signals in said threshold detection circuit within a predetermined range of operating signal  
13   levels in response to changes in supply voltage and operating temperature.

1    6. (Original) The switching system of Claim 5 wherein:

2       said sensor is a magnetic-field-to-voltage transducer for generating a first signal  
3    voltage having a signal voltage level which is proportional to a magnetic field having a first  
4    polarity and a second signal voltage having a signal voltage level that is proportional to a  
5    magnetic field having a second different polarity; and

6       said threshold detection circuit is coupled to said magnetic-field-to-voltage transducer  
7    to receive the first and second signal voltages and to provide an output signal having a first  
8    value when the article is within the predetermined distance of said magnetic-field-to-voltage

9 transducer regardless of the polarity of the magnetic field with respect to said magnetic-field-to-voltage transducer.  
10

1 7. (Original) The switching system of Claim 6 wherein:  
2 said magnetic-field-to-voltage transducer is a Hall element circuit; and  
3 said threshold detection circuit is a comparator coupled to said Hall element circuit.

1 8. (Original) The switching system of Claim 7 wherein said comparator is a window  
2 comparator comprising first and second differential pair circuits, each of said first and second  
3 differential pair circuits having an input terminal coupled to one of a pair of outputs from said  
4 Hall element circuit and an output terminal coupled to an output terminal of said comparator.

1 9. (Original) The switching system of Claim 8 further comprising a filter and level  
2 shifter circuit coupled between said Hall element circuit and said comparator.

1 10. (Original) The switching system of Claim 8 further comprising first and second output  
2 amplifier stages, each of the output amplifier stages coupled between a respective one of the  
3 output terminals of the first and second differential pair circuits and the output terminal of  
4 said comparator.

1 11. (Original) The switching system of Claim 10 further comprising an output/buffer  
2 amplifier stage having an input terminal coupled to the output terminal of each of said first  
3 and second output amplifier stages and having an output terminal coupled to the output  
4 terminal of said comparator.

1 Claims 12-20 (canceled)

1 21. (Amended) A method of switching comprising the steps of:  
2 (a) sensing a magnetic field provided by a magnetic article having a first pole and a  
3 second pole wherein said magnetic article has first magnetic field polarity at the first pole and  
4 a second different magnetic field polarity at the second pole;

5 (b) generating a sensor output signal having a signal level which is proportional to the  
6 magnetic field sensed in step (a), wherein the sensor output signal has a first signal direction  
7 when the sensed magnetic field has the first polarity and a second opposite signal direction  
8 when the sensed magnetic field has the second different polarity;  
9 (c) comparing the sensor output signal to one of first and second threshold signal levels;  
10 and  
11 (d) in response to the sensor output signal level reaching or exceeding the one of the first  
12 and second threshold signal levels, providing an output signal having a first signal level  
13 regardless of the direction of the sensor output signal;  
14 (e) in response to the sensor output signal having a first signal level which is less than the  
15 one of the first and second threshold signal levels, providing an output signal having a second  
16 different signal level regardless of the direction of the sensor output signal; and  
17 (f) in response to the output signal changing from the first signal level to the second  
18 different signal level, changing a switch point of a threshold circuit from a first predetermined  
19 threshold level to a second predetermined threshold level.

1 Claims 22-23 (canceled)

1 24. (Amended) The method of Claim 23-21 wherein the absolute value of the first  
2 predetermined threshold level is greater than the absolute value of the second predetermined  
3 threshold level.

1 25. (New) A switching system for providing a signal in response to an article which  
2 provides a magnetic field, the switching system comprising:  
3 (a) a sensor for sensing the magnetic field of the magnetic article, said sensor for  
4 generating a first signal voltage having a signal voltage level which is proportional to a  
5 magnetic field having a first polarity and a second signal voltage having a signal voltage level  
6 that is proportional to a magnetic field having a second different polarity; and  
7 (b) a threshold detection circuit coupled to the sensor to receive the first and second  
8 signal voltages and responsive to a supply voltage to provide an output signal having a first

9       value when said magnetic article is within a predetermined distance of the sensor regardless  
10      of the polarity of the magnetic field, said threshold detection circuit comprising a circuit for  
11      comparing said first signal voltage to a first threshold level and for comparing said second  
12      signal voltage to a second threshold level, wherein said first and second threshold levels are  
13      substantially constant in response to variations in said supply voltage.

1        26.    (New) A switching system for providing a signal in response to an article which  
2        provides a magnetic field, the switching system comprising:  
3        (a)    a sensor for sensing the magnetic field of the magnetic article, said sensor for  
4        generating a first signal voltage having a signal voltage level which is proportional to a  
5        magnetic field having a first polarity and a second signal voltage having a signal voltage level  
6        that is proportional to a magnetic field having a second different polarity; and  
7        (b)    a threshold detection circuit coupled to the sensor to receive the first and second  
8        signal voltages and responsive to a supply voltage to provide an output signal having a first  
9        value when said magnetic article is within a predetermined distance of the sensor regardless  
10      of the polarity of the magnetic field, said threshold detection circuit comprising a circuit for  
11      comparing said first signal voltage to a first threshold level and for comparing said second  
12      signal voltage to a second threshold level, wherein the first threshold level is changed to a  
13      third threshold level and the second threshold level is changed to a fourth threshold level in  
14      response to the output signal changing from the first value to a second value.